

MOBILIZE

ADVOCATE

SERVE

Strategic Plan
2023 – 2027



About AMHO

AMHO represents over 150 addictions and mental health organizations in Ontario. Our members provide services and supports that help Ontarians across the province with their recovery, including community-based counselling and case management, peer support, residential treatment, withdrawal management, supportive housing, harm reduction and hospital-based programs.

We recognize that our strategic plan must align with our members' needs and priorities, as well as their expertise in serving individuals with addiction and mental illness. This is why our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan is centred on building a comprehensive and connected system, in collaboration with our members, the clients they serve, system leaders, and government decision makers. Our plan is rooted in the input of our diverse membership, staff, individuals with lived experience, families, caregivers, partners, and system leaders.

About the plan

The new AMHO Strategic Plan will guide our priorities, and will position us to advocate and work effectively with government and continue to lead change that will revolutionize the addiction and mental health care experience for people in Ontario.

Our Vision

The best addiction and mental health system, anywhere.

Our Mission

To lead change that will revolutionize the addiction and mental health care experience for people in Ontario.

Letter from the Chief Executive Officer and Board Chair

Dear Members and Sector Partners,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) is excited to present its 2023-2027 strategic plan.

AMHO's new strategic plan was created during a time when society is emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic that saw a historic increase in people living with from mental health and substance use challenges. At the same time, those that provide care are struggling with widespread health human resource challenges, mounting wait times, and historic underinvestment into key capabilities such as health human resources, digital infrastructure and housing. Additionally, the sector is facing substantial structural changes in relation to health system integration. Combined, these factors have a substantial impact on AMHO's members and those they serve.

The sector is also experiencing a growing public interest for it to ensure timely, equitable, high quality and interconnected services that address the escalating needs of the population.

Hence, there has — perhaps — never been a more important time for AMHO and its

members to focus their effort on creating an addictions and mental health system that provides profound support to those who need it.

In developing this plan, AMHO spent eight months talking with our staff, our members and key system stakeholders to ask the question: How can we best direct our efforts over the next four years to make a difference?

The answers we heard clearly reflected the need for AMHO to be laser-focused on tackling major system performance issues and using the association's voice to drive genuine impact and meaningful change. We also heard a call for the association to elevate the experience and expertise of our members and their clients with lived experience to drive system-level change. Only through mobilizing the shared knowledge of the people across the mental health and addictions community can we catalyze the types of change needed.

AMHO is excited to launch the strategic plan and work with our members and partners to implement it and continue our efforts in making a difference for our members and the people they serve.

Sincerely,



A blue ink signature of Nancy Chamberlain.

Nancy Chamberlain
CEO Thunder Bay Counselling
and Board Chair



A black ink signature of Alisha Tharani.

Alisha Tharani
CEO




In this strategic plan, AMHO commits to advance its crucial mission in three key areas over the next four years:

Mobilize the sector to drive high performance.

Advocate for system transformation and equitable investment.

Serve our members and their communities.

Activity in each of these three strategic areas is mutually reinforcing. By pushing for change in all three areas, we can drive the system-level change that our members and the public needs and deserves.



Mobilize

AMHO's aims to increase the health, well-being and recovery of the clients our members serve, and the people living in Ontario, by driving meaningful impact and change to the addictions and mental health sector.

The need for a strong, high-performing mental health and addictions system has never been greater. AMHO's members possess deep sector knowledge, expertise and experience. They provide excellent mental health and addictions programs and are innovative in their approach to care. However, not all Ontarians are getting the access they need to these services.

For too long, the mental health and addictions system has been asked to scale programs on shoe-string budgets with little investment in developing core foundational capacities and capabilities in digital infrastructure, data analysis and impact reporting. As the mental health and addictions needs of the population continue to rise, it is vital to ensure that our province's services are funded and designed to support a commitment to continuous quality improvement and barrier-free access to care.

AMHO will mobilize the sector for a better system for the clients who use it. AMHO will play a leading role in working with our members to mobilize their knowledge and innovation, build capacity and scale sector-leading best practices. We will support peer-to-peer learning to share innovations in care. We will leverage our members' extensive expertise to showcase leading evidence-informed models and work with our funders and other partners to drive broader adoption as well as sustained investment in building a world-class mental health and addictions system for all Ontarians.

In all that we do, we will work to ensure that the key principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and codesign with clients, families, caregivers, and people with lived and living experiences are embedded in the development and growth of programs.

We will:

- **Develop strong networks to enable peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange.**
- **Build the case to scale promising innovation for population-level impact.**
- **Continue to support a culture in the mental health and addictions sector that is based on advancing continuous quality improvement and barrier-free access to care.**
- **Identify, highlight and publicize innovations and emerging best practices from across the mental health and addictions system.**

Advocate

AMHO will continue to advocate for the needs of Ontarians who are experiencing or may experience mental health or substance issues and the organizations who deliver them care.

Our focus is ensuring that the policy and funding environments support a system that combats stigma and truly puts clients and caregivers at the centre; a system that promotes equitable and timely access to high-quality care; a system that connects clients seamlessly to services both within and beyond the health system, where and when they need it.

Over the next four years, AMHO will advocate for meaningful and sustainable change at the system level. We will ensure that the voices and perspectives of our members, and the clients they serve, are engaged in driving change with government and the public. Appreciating that our current environment continues to rapidly evolve, AMHO will dive deep into the most pressing issues while remaining agile and nimble in our approach, ensuring that we can respond to emerging challenges as they arise.

AMHO's advocacy will offer practical, yet ambitious solutions to address the mounting mental health and addictions needs of our population. We recognize that true system transformation will require the perspectives of government, service delivery organizations, front-line providers, clients, families, caregivers and others to come together to identify and implement a path forward. AMHO is committed to working as a strong and accountable partner through this process of change and transformation.

We also recognize that, although many AMHO members receive core funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health, increasingly we need to take a cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional lens to drive change. AMHO will look to partner strategically to ensure that the expertise and perspectives of its members are able to advance conversations across the broader social determinants of health at the regional, provincial and national levels, and with partners that carry a shared vision for system transformation.

We will:

- Advance practical yet ambitious solutions to address major system challenges like the health human resources shortages, underinvestment, the opioid crisis and access to housing.
- Support members to advocate for system improvement at the local level through training, tools and capacity building.
- Catalyze broader change through strategic partnerships at the regional, provincial and national level.
- Build public awareness to amplify advocacy efforts.

Serve

AMHO members — and those they serve — are facing an environment of profound change and uncertainty. Demand for mental health and addictions services is increasing dramatically, and at the same time, the way our health care system is funded and structured is changing profoundly.

In such an environment, it is vital to identify which changes in the environment offer the greatest potential risks and benefits to the services delivered by members and provide clear analysis and actionable advice regarding what member organizations can do to best position for success.

AMHO is committed to facilitating practical and strategic knowledge exchange by equipping our members with the information needed to understand, navigate and act on the system changes in a timely manner. We will provide excellent and timely communication and analysis on issues of top-relevance and value to the membership and support their ability to rapidly act on and/or adapt to system changes and opportunities. We will supplement our internal capacity with external experts that can support members in understanding key changes in the system, such as the operational impact of new government bills. Our goal is to equip members with both relevant information and actionable advice.

Three years of working during a global pandemic has altered how AMHO and our members work and communicate. As we emerge from the pandemic, AMHO will work with its members to ensure that knowledge exchange approaches capture the best of in-person and virtual modalities to, not only share information, but also build relationships, trust, meaningful connectivity and support ongoing learning and growth.

We will:

- Provide actionable advice regarding major system changes by monitoring, distilling and reporting on significant legislative, policy and funding changes
- Optimize member communication practices and processes to ensure purposeful engagement
- Create opportunities for our members to engage dynamically with leading external experts on issues of top concern



Addiction and mental health issues are critical health concerns in our province today. By mobilizing the sector, advocating for system transformation, and serving our members and our communities, AMHO aims to drive meaningful change that will improve the lives of Ontarians.

AMHO is committed to working in collaboration with its members, government, and other stakeholders to ensure that Ontarians have access to the necessary services. By working together, we can eliminate barriers to care for individuals experiencing addiction and mental health issues and strive towards an integrated system where everyone receives the care they need—when and where they need it.



amho.ca

AMHO is a membership-based non-for-profit organization focused on building a comprehensive and connected mental health system in Ontario.

Together, we represent over 150 addiction and mental health organizations across Ontario and more than 50,000 health care workers.